Great is *DIANA* OF THE *EPHESIANS:* OR, The Original of IDOLATRY, Together with the Politick Institution OF THE *GENTILES SACRIFICES.*

by Charles Blount

Cum sis ipse nocens, moritur cur victima pro te?
Stultitia est morte alterius sperare salutem.

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PREFACE

THE

PREFACE

SElf-love, which like Fire covets to reſolve all things into it ſelf, makes Men they care not what Villany or what Impiety they act, ſo it may but conduce to their own advantage. And from hence it was, that the Heathens turn'd Religion into a Trade, wherein the moſt gainful was their Sacrifices: Mendicantes vicatim Deos ducunt; *a God was then as fit an object for Charity, as now a broken Arm, or a wooden Leg: Nor did they conſider their Gods any otherwiſe, than for their own Intereſt. Now as Muſick hath that Sympathetick power, to heighten that Paſſion which is moſt predominant in Mens Natures, whether of Mirth or Melancholy; ſo likewiſe Religion, if it meets with good Nature, it makes it better, but if with bad Nature, it makes it worſe: Not*

that true Religion is here to be blamed, but only those ill Constitutions, wherein the most Sacred Instructions turn sowre. Obdurate Hearts are ever most subject to Atheism, whereas softer Natures are ever more inclined to Superstition; in which latter, Devotion is ever more prevalent than Judgment: For as Philosophy applies it self to Reason, so doth Religion to Passion; and therefore none are so successful, as those Fanatical sellers of words, who are most quarrelsom with their Pulpits: Whereby they have a double advantage; first, they appear more zealous to the World; and secondly, the Nonsense they deliver is not so easily discerned by the credulous Multitude, who are ever ravished with the Tone and Noise, and praise not the Lord but through the Nose.

The Immortal God is of too sublime a Nature, to be comprehended by us Mortals; wherefore no Men are so great Atheists, as those who make a livelihood by telling Lyes of his most Sacred Majesty. Conversо in precium Deo. *How many Religions are there in the World, which (though of contrary Principles to one another,) yet all pretend themselves derived*

derived from one and the ſame Infinite Being? Therefore he who would be of the moſt excellent Faith, muſt try all, and then (as St. Paul *adviſes) hold faſt that which is beſt. He ſhould do by the ſeveral Religions, as* Potamon *of* Alexandria *did by the many Sects of Philoſophy, elect what was good out of each, and relinquiſh the bad. Now moſt Religions (excepting ours,) being tainted with the Intereſt of the Clergy, he muſt examine and conſider them accordingly: For if a Porter ſhould come and tell me, he had brought me ſuch a Letter from my Father, and the firſt part of the Letter ſhould teach Obedience to Parents, but the latter part of it ſhould command me to give the ſaid Porter half my Eſtate; in this caſe I ſhould (notwithſtanding the Teſtimony of his Brother-Porters,) without ſome further demonſtration, believe the Letter a Counterfeit; as alſo that the firſt part of it, which taught Obedience, was only to make way for the ſecond and principal clauſe,* viz. *the giving the Porter Money.*

Now moſt of the Heathen Prieſts were ſuch Porters, and their Arcana Divini-

tatis *but ridiculous Nothings, wherewith they deluded the Vulgar. As I have heard of a Country-Alehouſe-keeper, who being a crafty Knave, deviſed this trick to get a ready vent for his Liquor: He gave out a report at ſeveral Market-Towns, that he had taken a monſtrous Beaſt in ſuch a Wood; whereupon many Country-people flock'd in to ſee this wonderful Beaſt, which out of policy he kept in the dark corner of a Room, withal adviſing the people not to approach too near him, for fear of danger: but this not ſatisfying the curioſity of one of the Clowns, who had drank higher than the reſt, he runs in to this Monſter, unties him, and brings him out into the light; where this Creature (which had occaſion'd ſo many lyes, quarrels and diſputes about the Nature of him, whilſt he remain'd in the dark) proved after all, to be nothing but a little Cur-dog in a Doublet:* Parturiunt montes, naſcetur ridiculus mus. *However, the man had his deſign in ſelling off his Liquor.*

Such were the myſteries of the ancient Heatheniſh Religions, and what I have here written concerns them only: for when

when Christ came into the World, he deliver'd a Doctrine so pious, just, and necessary, that (even in its Infancy) its own merits supported it, without the assistance of Princes *or Grandees. What is more reasonable than to forbear those Lusts which will ruine us both here and hereafter? or who but a mad-man would condemn that Law for unjust, which prohibits him from murdering himself? and Christ doth no more. Now if the Law be good, what must the Law-giver be? for such as the Fruit is, such must the Tree be also. Some have even among the Heathens been reported to have wrought Miracles, as* Apollonius Tyanæus; *others have deliver'd good Doctrines, as* Plato, Seneca, Epictetus, &c. *but what one man ever did both to that perfection, as Christ did? Many in all Religions have dyed to justifie their Opinions; but who like the Primitive Christians ever died to justifie the truth of* Miracles, *which they beheld with their own eyes? But this is unnecessary, for that I write not to Heathens, but Christians.*

The general decay of Piety, hath in most Religions whatsoever proceeded from

the exemplary viciousneſs of their Clergy; (though perhaps leſs in ours, than in others; for I am unwilling to raiſe an unjuſt outcry againſt a good Air, becauſe ſome few debauch'd perſons dye in it. Should a Phyſician prohibit all Mankind from Wine, as poyſonous, and preſently he himſelf ſhould drink ſome, I had reaſon to queſtion the truth of his former opinion, and ſhould have cauſe to believe, that he coveted to monopolize the beſt Wines for himſelf. What Heathen Prieſts could with any confidence prohibit Murther, when they themſelves did ſo frequently ſacrifice poor innocent men in their Temples? with what juſtice could that Prieſt who aſſiſted at the Rape of Paulina *in the Temple of* Apis, *proſcribe Adulteries or Rapes?*

If Shepherds go themſelves aſtray,
How ſhould their Sheep e're find the way?
If he that Teaches, is to Learn,
How ſhould the Scholar truth diſcern?

Vale.

THE

The Original of IDOLATRY,

Together with the Politick Inſtitution OF THE *GENTILES SACRIFICES.*

The Proem.

A Diſcourſe concerning Heathen Religions in general, were certainly a vaſt undertaking, and vain; it being too immenſe a labour for any one man, either by reading, ſufficiently to comprehend the Ancient Idolatry, or by Travel through both the *Indies* to diſcern that of this Age. Nor would it be leſs vain, if poſſible

poſſible to be attain'd: For all Superſtitions are to the people but like ſeveral Sports to Children, which varying in their ſeveral Seaſons, yield them pretty entertainment for the time, and when grown out of requeſt, deſerve no further conſideration, but are ſtill ſupplanted by new ones to the ſame purpoſe. Therefore to abbreviate my undertaking, after having touched a little upon the Original of Idolatry, I do in the reſt of this diſcourſe confine my ſelf to one part of their Superſtition, *viz.* their Sacrifices, and more eſpecially their Sanguinary ones, as being the moſt horrid and brutiſh of all others: Alſo in them I obſerve only their ſeeming Rational and Politick Fundamentals, without mentioning the Sacerdotal particulars in the celebration of their fantaſtical Ceremonies, which are innumerable, though in effect but like the Ribbons on a Hobby-horſe. Now if any Hypocrite to glorifie his own zeal, ſhould pretend that a diſcourſe of this nature does through the Heathen Sacrifices, reproach thoſe of *Moſes*, which reſembled them but in outward appearance, he muſt retrieve himſelf from that error, if he rightly apprehends the difference: For the one juſtifies his Inſtitutions as directed to the true God, and ordain'd as Typical by his appointment; whereas the other (*viz.* thoſe of the Heathen) had neither of theſe Qualifications, and therefore

no

no more ought to be ſpared for their reſemblance to thoſe of the *Jews*, than a Criminal ought to be pardoned for wearing the ſame coloured Garments with the Judge. Moreover, for the further juſtification of this Treatiſe, I have the Holy Scriptures for my Preſident, wherein we may often find recorded the Idolatry of the Ancient Heathens, *viz.* of ſuch as ſacrificed to *Baal*, and offer'd up Cakes to the Queen of Heaven: Therefore all further Apologies I ſhall decline, as unneceſſary in ſo brief a Narrative.

Sect. I.

Before Religion, that is to ſay, Sacrifices, Rites, Ceremonies, pretended Revelations, and the like, were invented amongſt the Heathens, there was no worſhip of God but in a rational way, whereof the Philoſophers pretending to be Maſters, did to this end, not only teach Virtue and Piety, but were alſo themſelves great examples of it in their Lives and Converſations; whom the People chiefly follow'd, till they were ſeduced by their crafty and covetous Sacerdotal Order; who, inſtead of the ſaid Virtue and Piety, introduced Fables and Fictions of their own coining; perſwading the Vulgar, that as men could not by any natural abilities of their own, know the beſt manner of ſerving God, ſo it was neceſſary that He ſhould reveal the ſame to his Prieſts in ſome extraordinary manner, for the better inſtruction of the

the People. Whereupon pretermitting the Doctrines of Piety and Goodneſs for the moſt part, they introduced a Religious worſhip of their own moulding, which amuſed and ſuſpended mens minds in great part, and at laſt made the people relie ſo much upon them, that they neglected their proper duties, conſiſting chiefly in the Sacrifices, Expiations and Luſtrations of their Prieſts; who finding they got more by the ſins and ignorance of the common people, than by their virtue and knowledge, made divers things ſins which otherwiſe were but indifferent, eſpecially thoſe things which mens natures could with the moſt difficulty reſiſt: which obſervation produced this ingenious Copy of Verſes from a Modern Author, no leſs eminent for his Wit, than for his Quality.

Oh wearifom condition of Humanity!
Born under one Law, to another bound:
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity,
Created ſick, commanded to be ſound.
What meaneth Nature by theſe divers Laws?
Paſſion and Reaſon ſelf-diviſion cauſe.

Is it the mark or majeſty of Power
To make offences that it may forgive?
Nature her ſelf, doth her own ſelf deflower,
To hate thoſe Errors ſhe her ſelf doth give:
For how ſhould man think that he may not do,
If Nature did not fail and puniſh too?

Tyrant

Tyrant to others, to her ſelf unjuſt,
Only commands things difficult and hard:
Forbids us all things which it knows is Luſt,
Makes eaſie pains, unpoſſible reward.
If Nature did not take delight in blood,
She would have made more eaſie way to good.

We that are bound by vows and by promotion,
With pomp of Holy Sacrifice and Rites,
To teach belief in good and ſtill devotion,
To preach of Heav'ns wonders and delights;
Yet when each of us in his own Heart looks,
He finds the God there far unlike his Books.
Chorus Sacerdotum, Ld. *Brook's* Muſtapha.

They forbad ſome meats as unclean, which yet were wholſom; commanding others to be uſed, which yet muſt be offer'd or ſacrificed, that ſo they might have their parts; allotting ſome days to labour, and others to idleneſs: of all which, and many more conſpicuous in pomp and ceremony, they conſtituted themſelves the Patrons and Procurers. To whom no men were ſo odious as your incredulous honeſt men; for if a man were incredulous and vicious, that was the greater honour to the credulous party; or if a man were credulous and vicious that did not any more reflect upon their Religion, than one man's being hang'd for diſhoneſty, ſcandalizes a Government; beſides they might pretend his Faith was never ſincere. But he that led an honeſt virtuous

virtuous life, without any Faith for their Superſtitions, he was the only perſon odious unto them, as a perſon that demonſtrated unto the World how unneceſſary the Prieſts and their Doctrines were to the propagation of Virtue. The Philoſophers had their extravagancies in Natural, but they all agreed in Moral Philoſophy; nor was Virtue any where better delineated, than by thoſe ancient Philoſophers, *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, *Epictetus*, *&c.* in ſo much that *Hierophantæ*, or Teachers of Holy Doctrine, was a name anciently and primitively given to Philoſophers. *Sit pura mente colendus*: A pure undefiled Spirit is the only Sacrifice which Philoſophy commands them to offer unto God. But as that taught the knowledge of God in his Works, and a rational way to ſerve him, ſo the Doctrines of their Prieſts introduced not only impertinent, but alſo abſurd and impious Tenents concerning God and Religion, withdrawing them as well from the uſe of their Reaſon, as from the ſtudy of Truth: not allowing them any knowledge of God, or Religious worſhip, but what themſelves taught. Nay, they betray'd the people into the Adoration of many Gods, becauſe thereby they acquired to themſelves much greater advantages by adoring many Deities, and introducing ſeveral Worſhips of them, than they could have expected from the ſingle worſhip of one ſupreme

preme God. All which ſerves but to confirm the verity of that Epigram, *Ut melius poſſis fallere, ſume togam.* This Sacerdotal villany was well known to *Diogenes*, as we may learn from the Anſwer he made to the Prieſt who came to convert him to be of his Order, in hopes of *Elizium*: *Wilt thou* (ſaith *Diogenes*) *have me to believe that thoſe famous men*, Ageſilaus *and* Epimanondas, *ſhall be miſerable, and that thou who art but an Aſs, and doeſt nothing of any worth, ſhalt be happy only becauſe thou art a Prieſt?* So contemptible was their profeſſion in that wiſe Man's opinion. But of this more hereafter.

II.

The Primitive Inſtitution of Idolatry receiv'd its Birth from Princes, at whoſe charge it was afterwards Educated by Eccleſiaſticks; the one made the Idol, and the other ordain'd the worſhip of it. And this we may learn from the Book of the *Wiſdom of Solomon*, wherein it is ſaid, *That the Father made the Image of the deceaſed Son, and the Son of the dead Father.* Thus *Ninus* after the death of his Father *Nimrod*, worſhipp'd him by the name of *Bel*, or *Belus*, which in the *Punick* Tongue ſignifies *God*: (From whence I conceive that errour of many Hiſtorians does proceed, who hearing of a *Nimrod* that after his death was adored by the name of *Belus*, preſently miſapprehended them to be two ſeveral perſons, who were

were really but one under two ſeveral names: And therefore we ſee *Africanus* begins his Chronicle with *Belus*.) Now the uſe of this Adoration, was to breed a veneration in the common People, not only for the Prince deceaſed, but likewiſe for all his Poſterity, as Men of the *Jupitrean* Race. This Idol being therefore at firſt worſhipped only in commemoration of ſome *Hero*, or gallant Perſon, as his Effigies, grew in time to be by Poſterity reverenced as a God, and as his courage or prudence in his life-time, was conducive to the grandeur and glory of his Subjects, ſo they thought being dead, he was no leſs able to aſſiſt them; with which expectation they paid frequent Vows, Prayers and Sacrifices unto him, ſuch as were ordain'd by their Prieſts.

III.

Now Idolatry being thus inſtituted by the Civil power, the Eccleſiaſtick was left to build upon that foundation, which preſented them with a fit opportunity to introduce thoſe Rites and Ceremonies, as might render them neceſſary in the performance of the ſame. For as Men who drink Healths, do it more for love of the Liquor, than for love of the Party whoſe Health they drink; ſo did the Heathen Clergy, under pretence of wiſhing well to others, enrich and advantage themſelves: They not being like the Paſtors of the Chriſtian Church, who (according to Chriſt's

Chriſt's Rule) ought to be like Sheep amongſt Wolves; whereas the others were rather like Wolves among Sheep. Therefore we ſee with how great malice and violence they perſecuted all ſuch as oppoſed their impious Doctrines, when poor *Socrates* could not eſcape with his life, only becauſe he preached up the belief of one Supreme God: From whence we may obſerve, that as pity is leſs culpable than malice, ſo in Superſtition is incredulity leſs miſchievous than credulity; the incredulous only pitying the credulous, whereas the credulous always envy the incredulous.

IV.

Now whenever theſe Prieſts wanted wit to delude the Vulgar, with ambiguous Anſwers of their own inventions, they repair'd to the Temples of their Gods, and there lay all that Night; telling the People at their return, how being half aſleep and half awake, their God ſpake and reveal'd ſuch and ſuch things, which they were commanded again to deliver unto the People for their ſatisfaction, when any buſineſs of importance occurr'd in the Commonwealth; ſpeaking therein many times not ſo much their own ſenſe, as the ſenſe of the Magiſtrate, where there was occaſion to abuſe the People into any belief, that might relate to ſome publick good: In all which caſes, the Magiſtrate ſeem'd firſt to believe them.

them. Alſo they had certain Books, which with much ſolemnity were conſulted upon emergent occaſions; ſuch were the *Apollinis Libri*, as alſo the *Sibyllina Oracula*, which *Tarquinius* bought at ſo high a rate, and afterwards depoſiting them in the Temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, might perhaps be there burnt together with the ſaid Temple in *Scylla*'s time. The *Hetruſci* had likewiſe their Books of natural predictions called *Hauruſpicini, Fulgurales, & Rituales*; as alſo the *Romans* had theirs call'd *Augurales Libri*, wherein was contain'd moſt of their Religious Worſhip.

V.

The firſt Idolatry is thought to have come from *Ægypt*, and that the *Ægyptians* in all probability began their Religious Worſhip from the Sun, or at leaſt from the whole Machine of Heaven. The next to the *Ægyptians* were the *Hetruſci*, who proved their Doctrine by Antiquity and Univerſality, as alſo by Predictions. But the moſt ancient Religion next to the *Ægyptian* and *Hetruſcan*, was that of the *Druyds*, who were heretofore the Prieſts of *France*, *Germany*, and ſome parts of *England*. The School of theſe *Druyds* flouriſhed within leſs than one Hundred Years after the *Phœnicians*; and were deſtroyed, together with their Religious Worſhip, by the Emperor *Tiberius*. Theſe *Druyds* (beſides ſome Opinions they held

held in common with the other *Gentiles*, concerning Worſhip due to the Heavens, Planets, and Stars) took certain Obſervations from Oaks, Galls, and Miſſletow, for their prognoſtication of the enſuing Year. The *Bardi* were a diſtinct Colledge in *England* from the *Druyds*; they had little of the Philoſopher or Vaticinator in them. The *Brachmans* were ancient Philoſophers and Prieſts in the *Indies*, and continue ſo to this day; they hold the Tranſmigration of Souls with *Pythagoras*, which Opinion (as both *Apian* and *Clemens* affirm) he took from the *Jews*, and was therefore (ſay they) circumciſed after their manner. The *Gymnoſophiſts* were an ancient Sect of Philoſophy and Divinity amongſt the *Æthiopians*. The *Perſians* following *Zoroaſter*, acknowledged *duplex principium*, as the *Ægyptians* did; worſhipping the Sun above, and the Fire beneath: They had anciently their Wiſe Men, or *Magi*. The *Thracians* communicated many of their Rites and Ceremonies to the *Grecians*. The *Scythians* and *Getes* had certain Prieſts and Philoſophers inſtituted according to the manner of *Zamolxis*; who travelling into *Ægypt*, brought home with him ſome of their Doctrines and Ceremonies. The ancient *Roman* Prieſts took many of their Laws and Ceremonies from the *Hetruſci*. The *Germans* and *Celtes* had their Prieſts which were called *Semnothei*. The *Goths* had their

Prieſts

Priests call'd *Parabuſcei*: And the *Africans* their Philoſophers and Priests call'd *Arhantrei, Libyci, & Hiſpani.* Now in all theſe ſeveral Sects, there were not any two that agreed exactly in their Doctrines, although the fundamental deſign of all was the ſame, *viz.* the ſharing of the Sheep; about which they did frequently quarrel with one another, in ſo much, that one of the Ancients ſaid, He would avoid all controverted Points, until the Priests were agreed amongſt themſelves.

VI.

There is nothing does more endanger Religion, than Oblivion; therefore ſo long as *Jupiter* was preach'd up at all, they did not much concern themſelves under what ſeveral Names, or ſeveral kinds of Adoration they worſhipp'd him; ſuch kind of diſputes being but like a quarrel between little Children, who having got one Joynted-Baby amongſt them, fall together by the Ears about the naming and dreſſing of it. For Hereſies in Religion, are but like Ivy-Trees, which though at firſt they rend and cleave the Walls whereunto they grow, yet afterwards ſerve to uphold and ſupport the ſame. Alſo the Magiſtrates did frequently connive at ſuch Hereſies, becauſe they found the Authority of Religion ſo prevalent in Mens Minds, that their Clergy when well united among themſelves, did oftentimes conteſt with

with the Secular power; which grew so dangerous, that they were contented to wink at the many divisions and absurdities amongst them: *Ne Sacra plus possent, quam Leges.* The chief and most eminent Office amongst the *Romans,* was that of the *Augurs*: The veneration and honour given unto them was so great, that they were look'd upon not only as the God's Interpreters, but also as Messengers and Agents betwixt them and Mankind. Besides, they were ever advanced to the Senate, and the rather, as is conceiv'd, because from the first foundation of *Rome,* until the change of the Government, Kings were *Augurs*, as not thinking it safe to disjoyn from the Regal power a discipline so full of Authority, as was that of an *Augur*; who were so highly esteem'd among the Ancients, that no Magistrate was chosen, nor business of importance done, till they were first consulted:

Those who to Empire by dark paths aspire,
Still plead a Call to what they most desire.
Mr. D.

Thus *Romulus* and *Numa* could receive their Scepters only from the *Augurs* hands, as *Titus Livy* informs us.

VII.

The Heathen Priests thinking it dangerous to teach any way to God which Men might go by themselves, without further guiding and

and directing, (like Muſicians who are unwilling to learn their Scholars to play by Notes, leſt they might grow able to improve themſelves without a Maſter,) did not as our Chriſtian Paſtors do, furniſh the People with a Record of their God's Commands, whereby they might walk themſelves without any other aſſiſtance; but on the contrary they inſtituted Luſtrations, Expiations, and the like, which none but themſelves could execute, and all was only to render the Clergy abſolutely neceſſary to the People.

The Original of Sacrifices, ſeems to be as ancient as Religion it ſelf; for no ſooner had Men found out that there was a God, but Prieſts ſtept up and ſaid, that this God had taught them in what manner he would be worſhipped. As Religion therefore ſeems to have began moſt anciently in the Eaſtern parts, or, as ſome will have it, in *Ægypt*; ſo did Sacrifices, which from thence were propagated to *Greece*, *Italy*, and other remoter parts. The number of Sacrifices, (ſays a learned Author) were among the *Ægyptians* reckoned to be *666*, which without all queſtion were multiplied by the Prieſts of ſeveral Countries, where the ſaid *Ægyptian* Sacrifices were receiv'd. But what a madneſs was this, to think to flatter the Divinity with Inhumanity? to content the Divine goodneſs with the affliction of his Creatures,

tures, and to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God with cruelty? A Superſtitious Man ſerveth God out of fear, whereas the truly Religious ſerves him out of love. Superſtition ſuffereth neither God nor Man to live at reſt, as evidently appears by theſe Heathen Sacrifices. What could be more ſottiſh or irrational, than to think that the ſlaughter of a poor innocent Creature, (who follow'd the ſimplicity of his own Nature, without ever offending God,) ſhould be ſo grateful to the Deity, as thereby we might expiate our ſins, and render a ſufficient attonement for the moſt execrable villanies of Mankind? as if the Almighty Juſtice could be no otherwiſe appeas'd for the errors of the Wicked, but by the ſufferings of the Innocent.

Now as Sacrifices were the moſt ancient and univerſal, ſo the greateſt and moſt myſterious fourbs that ever were invented or impoſed upon Mankind. What have Sacrifices to do with Sins? could none but their unenlightned Prieſts make peace between God and Man, when Sins were committed? was there no Addreſs to be made to the Divine Majeſty, but by their Interceſſion? were they the Courtiers of Heaven, and muſt they be firſt bribed, before Men could receive a Pardon for their Sins? an inward and hearty Repentance avail'd nothing amongſt them. Neither can the Heathens be excuſed by ſaying, that at the ſame time

when Sacrifices were offer'd, they might repent; for it doth so little appear that they commanded Repentance, as we can hardly find any mention thereof in their Religious Worship; however we may hope that God did work it in some of their Hearts; for we find in *Plato* and other Philosophers, sorrow for sin often enjoyn'd; and we may read among the *Septem Sapientes* this Holy Precept, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, which gives a brave entrance into the Christian Philosophy, as it stands recorded in Holy Writ. But this they ow'd to their Philosophy, and not Theology.

VIII.

The stupidity of these Heathen Sacrifices are sufficiently already exploded by *Lucian*, *Arnobius*, and others: The first condemning them as ridiculous, the latter as impious; for God will be serv'd in Spirit, and that which is outwardly done, is rather to glorifie our selves, than God. Yet however, as monstrous as their Doctrines and Sacrifices appear, they have been the chief support of the *Gentiles* Devotion for many Thousand Years, and in some Nations continue to this day. Perhaps melancholy Men might at first light upon this Frenzy, by observing how Nature had inevitably framed all Creatures to live by devouring and destroying one another; a Man eats not one Morsel, but he destroys an Animal or Vegetable life,

life, or at leaſt prevents them from attaining that life, which otherwiſe they would have enjoy'd. Nay, we cannot walk one ſtep, but probably we cruſh many Inſects creeping under our Feet; and the ſame happens to other Creatures, the Life of each being by Nature made præda ory upon others.

Torva leæna Lupum ſequitur, Lupus ipſe capellam;
Florentem Cytiſum ſequitur laſciva capella.
Virg. Eclog.

Upon this conſideration *Æſop*'s Wolfe (being touch'd in conſcience for the many Murders he had committed) vow'd never more to eat Fleſh, till being almoſt famiſh'd, and eſpying a Hog in a Puddle, he was forced by an interpretation wiſer than his Vow, to ſuppoſe the Hog a Fiſh, and ſo by devouring it, to ſave himſelf from ſtarving. It was alſo found by experience, how many Millions of violent Accidents were ever ready at hand to deſtroy all things that had Life in them; whereas Preſervatives were rarely to be met with: Nor could the very beſt Nouriſhment or Phyſick reprieve Life any conſiderable time, and that alſo ever attended with ſome miſchievous quality enclining towards Death; wherefore but like a ſmall Parentheſis, intervening a long Diſcourſe: Nor was the

longeſt eſtate of Life above a moment, compared with that of Death, which is for ever irrecoverable. Alſo the Sickneſs of one Man does often infect others, and extends to the deſtruction of many Thouſands: Whereas the Health of the ſoundeſt Body upon Earth, does not diffuſe it ſelf to the good of any but it ſelf.

IX.

So that by theſe, and ſuch like ſiniſter Obſervations, the deſtruction of things in being, appear'd to them to be more grateful to Heaven, than their preſervation: Whereupon Men raiſed unjuſt out-cries againſt the miſerable conditon of Humane life, laying that fault upon the Deity, which did proceed only from themſelves; and by this means fell to an unworthy Opinion of Cruelty in God: And therefore we ſee the Heathens for three or four eminent *Joves*, have many more *Vejoves*, or miſchievous ſuppoſed Deities. Nay, they erected Altars to moſt Diſeaſes and Vices, in hopes thereby to divert their infection from the People: As at this day many of the *Indians* do much more worſhip and conſult the Devil, for fear of miſchief, than they do the good Spirit which governs the World. But if it were poſſible for wiſe and virtuous Men to believe, that the Divine power delights in the ſlaughter and deſtruction of harmleſs Creatures which it ſelf hath made, they might

might perhaps ſuppoſe it to proceed, not out of cruelty, but rather as pleas'd to have them by a quick paſſage withdrawn from the ſufferings and lingring decays of long life, to be ſuddenly eſtabliſhed in an everlaſting undiſturb'd peace and indolency; or rather, if from our ſtate of ignorance it were poſſible to interpret Heaven, we might imagine, that it has made all Creatures unavoidably to deſtroy one another, in as much as that power which governs the Univerſe, does perhaps contrive the preſervation and flouriſhing eſtate thereof, in a proportion as far exceeding its regard of particulars, as the whole Globe of the Earth exceeds the ſmalleſt Sand upon the Sea-ſhore. And as for particular individuals, *Corruptio unius eſt Generatio alterius*; whereby it comes to paſs, that not only their Life, but even their Death, helps to renew the World, and ſo tends to its continuation and proſperity. From hence now peradventure Men of Airy Fancies might conceit, ſome reaſon why in Mankind and all other Sublunary things, when any one laſts longer than is ordinary for others of its kind to do, it is uſually puniſhed with Deformity and other Decays, for retarding (as much as in it lies) that meaſure of the World's Renovation, which would by its more early change, have accru'd thereunto.

These Thoughts unrectify'd, have even among Christians caused some Hereticks to think, that God has from the first Creation, infus'd into all perishable things, two internal Principles, the one Life and Preservation, the other Death and Destruction; also that according as either of these are more or less agreeably entertained, so is the Creature more or less vigorous and durable. Or peradventure they might more appositely have observed the rise and fall of things represented in the rotation of Wheels in a Chariot, whose several Spoaks are rais'd up, and cast down by one and the same mover, at one and the same time, without any separate assistant: For so they thought that Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, which is all in all, moves things by his immediate presence and inoperation, without any need of *Aristotle*'s Intelligences, *Plato*'s Dæmons, or other imaginary powers subservient: Nor that it merits a bad censure for destroying particulars, it being for an universal good.

X.

Now because the generality of Men are not thus Speculative or Philosophical in their Actions, but rather Crafty and Politick, as designing to themselves power amongst Men, and by consequence Riches and Honour, the most nervous and effectual consideration of the Gentiles Sacrifices must be taken that way.

way. Thus when Princes, who in the governing of Mankind, found it to be an unruly Creature, miſchievous, and not capable to be guided by ſolid reaſon or truth, but totally ſubjected to the paſſions of hope and fear; how falſe and vain ſoever, it matter'd not, provided that things were well fitted and ſuitable to their Capacities: Wherefore they to encourage obedience and good works, held forth Gain and Preferment; as on the other ſide, to deter from diſobedience and miſchief, they ordain'd Forfeitures and Diſgrace:

——— ——— *Et ponere Leges,*
Ne quis fur eſſet, neu latro, neu quis Adulter,
Horat. Serm.

Yet in as much as *abundans cautela non nocet*, and ſeeing there were many clandeſtine Villanies ſo ſecret and undiſcoverable, as could hardly be brought to an open conviction, for ſuch, the Magiſtrate rais'd within them *Animo tortore flagellum*, viz. in their Conſciences the fear of ſome future puniſhment; whereof for want of that true knowledge which we enjoy, they feign'd ſome of their own inventions, ſuch as the *Stygian* Lake, and the like; which in as much as the goodneſs of God, and their preſent inviſibility, rendred the leſs credible, therefore the declaring them to be with material

Fire, as alſo Eternal, did in good meaſure over-awe that Incredulity. From whence we may obſerve, how neceſſary and how natural is the belief of a Reward and Puniſhment hereafter; that even the unenlightned Heathens, as well for conveniency, as from the impulſes of their own Natures, were forced to acknowledge it. So rational and ſo natural is that Article of our Chriſtian Faith.

XI.

Now for the erecting of this Tribunal in the Minds of Men, they (not being enlightned from above) made uſe of Superſtition, (the offſpring of too much Honour, and too much Fear,) which being to be managed cunningly, and well fitting to vulgar capacities, they did little or not at all regard the ſatisfaction of clear rational Men. For firſt, the number of them is ſo ſmall, as they are of no power; and then they are too wiſe to hazard their own Ruine for the inſtruction of Fooliſh Men, caſting Pearl before Swine; knowing withall, that if any Man ſhould be ſo vain as to oppoſe the common belief, the *mobile* would (as they did by *Socrates*,) oppreſs and decry him for an Atheiſt. Therefore the wiſeſt among the Heathens follow'd this Rule in their Converſe, *Loquendum cum vulgo, ſentiendum cum ſapientibus; & ſi mundus vult decipi, decipiatur.* Our Saviour himſelf

found

ſound how improper it was to unfold his Sacred Myſteries to the ignorant Multitude, and therefore explain'd not his Parable of the Sower, till he was alone amongſt the Twelve, ſaying, *Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of God: but unto them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables; that ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not underſtand: leſt at any time they may be converted, and their ſins ſhould be forgiven them. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,* ſaith Chriſt, *Mark* 4. 11, 12. That is, not every one that can hear, but only ſuch as are well able to digeſt and underſtand what they do hear. Now this kind of reſervedneſs and ſecrecy being likewiſe obſerved by the moſt prudent of the Heathens, it made their Prieſts altogether neglect ſuch thoughts, though never ſo wiſe, as being well aſſured that their Prudence would hinder them from diſcovering or intereſting themſelves in the vulgar Superſtitions, how ſottiſh ſoever. But nevertheleſs to fortifie themſelves the better againſt any ſuch Diſcovery, they ever decry'd Humane Wiſdom, and magnify'd Ignorance; well knowing, that the ſeeds of their fooliſh Doctrine, would proſper no where but in barren Ground. Reaſon teaches that there is but one only ſupream God; but they taught the belief of many Gods. Reaſon teaches, that the Law of God, viz.

that Law which is absolutely necessary to our future happiness, ought to be generally made known to all Men; which theirs was not. Reason makes no difference betwixt their *Enthusiasticks*, and our Mad-Men. Reason expects some more convincing Argument to prove the infallible Divinity of their Laws, Inspirations, and Miracles, than an *ipse dixit*: And upon that Maxim of *Contra Principia non est disputandum*, Reason would reply, *Uno dato absurdo mille sequuntur*. Reason would suspect the power of their *Jupiter*, who had no way to reduce the *Trojans* to himself, but was forc'd to suffer his own Son *Sarpedon* to be knock'd on the Head by them. Reason would tell us that *Romulus* and *Rhemus* were Bastards, and that their Mother *Rhea*'s pretence of being layn with by God *Mars*, was only a sham upon the credulous multitude, hoping thereby to save both her Credit and her Life. Again, when they desire me to give but the same Credit to the History of their Gods, as I do to other History, I will; but as well in their Religious, as in *Livy* or other prophane History, when I hear of an Ox's speaking, or a God's descending in a Cloud and Shower of Gold, to lye with a Woman, in all such miraculous Narrations, my Reason desires to be further satisfy'd in the truth of them, than only by the report of the Author. *Proculus* tells us of *Romulus*'s appear-

ing

ing after his Death, and that he ſaw him all array'd in white, *&c.* but my Reaſon bids me *quære*., whether he had not ſome hand in his Murther, and thought by pretending *Romulus* to be taken up to Heaven, to clear himſelf to the People of that ſuſpicion. *Apollonius Tyanæus*, is reported by *Philoſtratus* to have rais'd a Maid from the Dead, but Reaſon queſtions whether the Maid was not only aſleep; for Sleep is the Image of Death. *Philoſtratus* alſo further telleth, that *Apollonius* vaniſhed away out of the Emperor's preſence, before a great number of People: But here Reaſon bids me obſerve, that although it is reported to have been done in the preſence of a great number of People, yet I have but the Teſtimony of one Man for the truth of it, *viz. Philoſtratus*, and not the Teſtimony of all thoſe People. The darkneſs of the Sun at *Julius Cæſar's* Death, appears to Reaſon to be but an Accident, proceeding from ſome natural cauſe, and that it was no greater Complement to *Cæſar*, than to any other Perſon in the World that died at the ſame Moment. There is nothing how impoſſible ſoever to be done, that is impoſſible to be believed; for two Men conſpiring, one to ſeem Lame, and the other to cure him with a charm, will deceive many; but many conſpiring, one to ſeem Lame, the other to cure him, and all the reſt to bear witneſs, will deceive more.

Thuss

Thus, when *Vespasian* is said to cure the Lame and the Blind, Reason reports the Story of it thus: That *Vespasian* observing how Kingdoms are preserved and augmented by Religion, pretending himself to have an immediate power from Heaven, and for that end corrupted two of his Subjects with Money, to feign themselves the one Blind, and the other Lame; whom he afterwards cured with much solemnity before the People. In the same manner the *French* Kings cure Men of the Evil; for the Physician first examines the Patient's Wound, and if he finds it incurable, then declares it is not the Evil: But if he finds it a Sore that is easie and likely to cure, then the Physician calls it the Evil, that so the King may have the credit of curing that, which would have done well of it self. These and many more such Impostures were put in practice by the Heathens, which for as much as Humane Reason detects, their Priests had great occasion to exclaim against it, as they did. Let us Christians from hence learn to esteem our Religion the more, which stands the Test of Reason, bidding us give a Reason for our Hope.

Furthermore, these grand Heathenish Impostures (the *Sacris initiati*, as they call'd themselves,) the better to prepare for the planting of their Idolatry in the minds of Men, did (under the pretence of speaking after

after the manner of men) pre-ſuppoſe their Gods to be originally, of Fleſh and Blood, attributing to them ſuch paſſions and deſigns as are only incident to mortals: They made them of both Sexes, Gods and Goddeſſes; *Jupiter* had his Wife *Juno*, and either for variety, or when weary of her Curtain-Lecture, he went to his Miſſes; but for a fuller entertainment in his Cups, they procured him a *Ganymede*: His Grave was alſo to be ſeen in *Crete*, as well as the Grave of any other perſon; and yet ſo ſortiſhly impious were they, as to believe this dead man to be the ever-living God. Nay, they made their Deities ſubject to thoſe Vices which were acted but by the worſt of men: in ſo much that nothing is more celebrated in *Jupiter*, than his Adultery; nor in *Mercury*, than his Fraud and Theſts, of whoſe praiſes in a Hymn of *Homer's*, the greateſt is this: That being born in the morning, he had invented Muſick by Noon, and before Night ſtoln away the Cattle of *Apollo* from his Herdſmen. Therefore in *Minutius* you may hear *Octavius* telling *Cæcilius*, that the Heathens entertain'd ſuch fabulous Notions of their Gods, as they uſually aſcribed ſuch horrid things to them, as would be accounted ſcandalous and diſhonourable to any good man:

Lemon-

Immortalia mortali ſermone notantes, Lucr.

The Heathens (ſays *Arnobius*) did by their Gods, as an Aſs would do by *Cato*, whom if he were to commend to his fellow-Aſſes, he would ſay he had delicate long Ears, could Bray very loud, and carry great Burthens; which being the moſt eminent qualities in Aſſes, they would attribute them to *Cato* when they meant to praiſe him: and juſt ſo did they impiouſly judge of their Gods; which an ingenious Phyſician obſerving, he would never give one of their Prieſt's Phyſick, till he was inform'd what opinion his patient had of Divine Vengeance; becauſe if he magnify'd God's mercy, then he gave him ſomething to purge Flegm; whereas if he extoll'd God's Judgments, then he gave him ſomething to purge Choler. *Cardan* was ſo uncharitable as to think this Superſtition (which did really ſink under the ruines of Paganiſm) was like the River *Arethuſa*, riſen up again even among the Chriſtians, ſaying, *Nos nebulones loquimur de Deo, tanquam de uno è nobis.* But this impiety is ſo far from being practiſed amongſt us Chriſtians of the Reformed Church, that Atheiſm it ſelf would be as ſoon tolerated. *Plutarch* deſired rather to be forgotten in the World, than remembred by the Name of the man

that

that used to devour his own Children, as *Saturn* is reported to have done: and it is better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an one as is dishonourable to him, as the Lord *Bacon* well observes. Yet this was the Heathen Faith; for although they did not own themselves to be made after the Image of God, yet did they in their fond Imaginations make their Gods after the Image of men: which must needs occasion the same mutual likeness.

XII.

Having thus therefore manured the Ground of Popular Understandings, wherein to sow the seed of Vulgar Religions, they sow'd thereupon such kind of Doctrines, as they judged best capable of reception, and most proper to each particular *Genius* of the time and people, according as they found them more or less rude or subtle, debauch'd or austere. Hence grew their Oblations, and Altars, whereon they were offer'd: these did always accompany their Prayers; for they supposing their Gods to be like the Eastern Princes, before whom no man might come empty handed, and perhaps because a great part of their Offerings fell to the Priest's share; therefore they soon left off *Numa Pompilius*'s Institution, who according to the poverty of those times, ordain'd a little Cake and Salt with a few Fruits: and so *Pythagoras* appointed Honey, Frankincense,

cenſe, Fruits, Flowers, and other things, but always *incruenta*; till in proceſs of time their Gods (or at leaſt their Prieſts) grew ſo covetous, that they could not be ſatiated without the Blood of Beaſts; whereupon men began to offer up Sheep, Oxen, and almoſt all manner of Beaſts, to one God or other; who at length, like corrupt Judges, were not to be bribed but at high rates, eſpecially where either the petitioner was a Rich man, or the Boon ſued for very conſiderable, or the God one of the better ſort: in ſuch a caſe Sheep were deſpiſed, and nothing leſs than an Ox would be accepted. Thus by degrees they grew to ſuch exceſs, that at length in caſe of a publick Peſtilence, or upon ſome great Warlike undertaking, it was not unuſual to offer *Hecatombs*, that is, an hundred Oxen, an hundred Sheep, and as many Swine, all at once upon a hundred ſeveral Altars. But to exceed all this, ſome grew to Sacrifice Men and Women: The ancient *Galli* uſed to feed a man ſumptuouſly for the ſpace of one year, and then upon a Feſtival day, they carried him out of the City and ſtoned him to death, as an Expiation for the Sins of the People. Alſo *Apollonius Tyanæus* thought to ſtop the Plague at *Epheſus*, by ſacrificing a poor old Beggar. Nay, ſome went further than this, and ſacrificed their own Children: thus *Agamemnon* upon his undertaking that

renowned

renowned War of *Troy*, offer'd up his only Daughter *Iphigenia*; and if he could have procured one of the Gods themselves, it is very probable he would have sacrificed him to *Jupiter* or *Mars*, for the better success in his enterprize.

We read in ancient History of many Heathens, who sacrificed their own lives to propitiate the Gods to their Countries: as *Codrus*, for the *Athenians*; *Menaceus*, for the *Thebans*; *Anchorus*, for the *Sydonians*; as also *Curtius* and the two *Decii*, for the *Romans*; whereof you may read at large in *Livy's* Eighth Book. Thus Humane Sacrifices grew every where so common, that in *Mexico* 20000 men in a year were frequently slain upon their Altars; for the more brutish and unnatural cruelties they used, the more prevalent they thought them with Heaven; and indeed they have usually been crown'd with the most success; perhaps supposing the intentional piety, to prevail above the unnatural act; or rather, that the general confidence of the Gods assistance to be thereby procured, might raise a more than ordinary vigour in the Souldiers minds, which is the chief cause of Victory. Therefore when they were ready to joyn Battel with the Enemy, it was usual to make some Vow to the Gods for their assistance; which when the other party understood, they always out-vow'd the former, in hopes there-

by

by to win the Gods from them, or at leaſt to make the Souldiers believe they had: thus the *Crotoniatæ* in their War againſt the *Locrenſes*, Vow'd to *Apollo* the tenth of the ſpoil, if he would give them victory: whereupon the *Locrenſes* to outvie them, vow'd to the ſame God the ninth part, if he would be on their ſide, and that re-vie carried it. Alſo the *French* under the conduct of *Ariſtonicus* againſt *Flaminius*, vow'd to *Mars* a great Gold-Chain; but *Flaminius* to out-bid them, vow'd to erect a magnificent Trophy, and ſo prevail'd. Much like the ſtory of a corrupt Judge, who being bribed with a Jar of Oyl, the other party came the next day and preſented him with a fat Ox, whereupon he gave ſentence for the Ox; and when the Oyl-man murmur'd, the Judge to excuſe the buſineſs told him, that in the place where the Jar of Oyl ſtood, an Unruly Ox brake in and overturn'd it, ſo as it was quite forgotten. And many times their Prayers were in themſelves ſo wicked and execrable, as could never hope for a reception, unleſs uſher'd in with a very tempting Oblation:

Da mihi fallere, da juſtum, ſanctumq; videri,
Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus objice nubem.
Horat.

This Prayer one would think needed an *Hecatomb* at leaſt to render it paſſable; but their

their Gods unwilling to let their Altars grow cold, would ſometimes like Country Attornies, rather take ſmall fees than none at all, to aſſiſt them in their Frauds.

XIII.

Now as there were Sacrifices to obtain things of the Gods, and Peace-offerings to appeaſe their ſuppoſed wrath and fury; ſo alſo were there others of thankſgiving, for Benefits receiv'd: thus the *Thurii* made a ſolemn Sacrifice to the North-wind, for having diſpers'd and ſunk the great Fleet which *Dionyſius* had ſent to invade their Country. But theſe kinds of Sacrifices were moſt practiſed in private Families, and therefore may rather be call'd *Gentilitia* than *Sacra popularia*: of this ſort were the *Sacra Clodiæ*, *Æmiliæ*, *Julianæ*, *Corneliæ gentis*, &c. mention'd in *Tully* and others; which private *Sacra* were made perpetual by the Laws, and ſo recommended to Poſterity. Now becauſe they were not only chargeable, but to be continued from Age to Age as long as the ſaid Family or Inheritance laſted, therefore Purchacers were glad *adire hæreditatem*, or to get ſuch a living as was not clogg'd with theſe entail'd Sacrifices; concerning which, you may find a merry paſſage in *Plautus*, where a Paraſite brags that he had gotten an Inheritance *ſine ſacris*, *ſine ſumptu*, *&c.* but however, there were not ſo many of theſe Thankſgiving Sacrifices, as

of

of the other; for as much as all men are naturally inclin'd to covet and wish well to themselves, but few are so generous as when their turns are serv'd, to give thanks, especially if it put them to charge: for thus we see many men will be mighty charitable in giving their blessing, good advice, or ghostly counsel, who nevertheless will not part with a farthing of money. The base ingratitude of Mankind, is in a just proportion represented in the ten Lepers; where although the reward expected for their Cure, was only an honest acknowledgement in a few words, yet when they had all they desir'd, and needed no more, there was but one in ten would trouble himself so much as to come and say, Sir, I thank you.

XIV.

Men may wonder why the Heathen Clergy did so highly extoll Sacrifices, to appease Divine Wrath against Sinners, and so little mention or make use of Repentance: But the Reasons of most obvious conjecture were two: First, they could not but observe how fickle a creature man is, he seldom holds long in a humour or resolution, especially if it goes against the grain of his natural inclinations: so as in effect, most men do but like little Children, who having committed a fault, will (to avoid whipping) say they will do so no more, but do it

it again the next hour: this made Repentance seem to them but formal, if not hypocritical; and although the intention of amendment of life were for the time in some earnest, for *stultus semper incipit vivere*, and so they may, like dying men in a dangerous fit of Sickness, vow to become new men: Yet considering how frequent and certain their Relapses were, it seem'd almost a mockery, or at the best, such carelessness as is hardly to be extenuate by the term of Humane Frailty, but rather a downright effect of incredulity; and if so, it were then a very improper Oblation to be recommended from their Clergy, who lived by the credulity of men. For certainly if men did really and seriously believe what they pretend, or what by fits they make themselves think they do believe, they could never live as they do; so that want of believing is the only thing which destroys all Religion, both true and false. The other and principal motive which induced the crafty Heathen Priests rather to promote Sacrifices, than Repentance, was for that they were to be managed by none but themselves; and so besides the great Profit they brought them, they also rendred them of absolute and perpetual use to the people; for they could never be laid aside, as being the only men who by their Oblations could mediate with Heaven for them: where-

as

as in Repentance they were altogether un-
concern'd, a broken and contrite heart wa
a Peace-offering which every man could
bring for himself, without the Priest
assistance, or any gain accruing to them
thereby.

XV.

Unless it were in *Japan*, I do not remem-
ber to have read of any place where they
assumed the Office of Confessors, with
power to absolve sinners; which peradven-
ture if they had presumed to claim, and
could have obtain'd, might have brought
them in as great a Reverence as any kind of
Oblation whatever; but they either thought
not of it, or it may be those great Officers
the *Censores Morum* would not admit there-
of: for that it was ever found true, *Facilis
iter ad peccatum, ubi venalis est gratia*; espe-
cially Rich men would not care how vicious
they were, knowing they had wherewithal
to procure Absolution when they pleased: so
that the Poor seem'd in a manner predesti-
nate to damnation, or God's Enemies, as
the *Turks* call them; who for that Reason
will very seldom relieve them.

He that would ask, what the ancient Re-
ligion of the Heathens was? it may be an-
swered him, that it was their Sacrifices;
which varied according to the several man-
ners of each Country. Now however all Sa-
crifices seem to be the invention of Priests,

yet

yet the *Cruenta* especially; many Philosophers condemning them, but above all *Pythagoras*, who said, That men ought to permit no Sacrifice made with slaughter; and that the innocent were not to be slain for the Gods, such cruelty being rather likely to aggravate, than extenuate mens other sins; also that Altars were not to be imbrued with Blood. *Porphiry* likewise saith, That in ancient times it was thought a great crime to kill any harmless innocent Beasts, they being intercommoners with men on Earth: And many besides him were of that opinion; as thinking it enough to take from the Sheep her Fleece, from the Cow her Milk, and from the Ox his Labour, without robbing them of their Lives. The killing of Animals in Sacrifice, was however thought to be very proper for Feasting; they might also not without some good intention be offer'd to their Gods, as to whom they ow'd their Food. The matter of Sacrifices in general, was Flesh, Fish, and Fowl, as also whatsoever did afford savoury and wholsom sustenance. But amongst all the *Cruenta Sacrificia*, the most ancient seems to be that of Swine, who for the trespass they made upon Agriculture, were offer'd to *Ceres* the Goddess thereof, as we may learn from this line of *Ovid*:

Prima Ceres avidæ gavisa est sanguine Porcæ.

Now

Now these *Cruenta Sacrificia* were used not only for Thanksgiving, but also for Expiation of their Sins; as likewise for assembling of the people together to make good Chear, and bring in Roast-meat for the Priests: Nor were Feasts uneffectual for the upholding of the Worship of their Gods in the Minds of Men; since at all Entertainments, the Company are naturally apt to drink the Founder's health. Sacrifices, especially the *Cruenta* seem to have been first used among the *Ægyptians*, and from them derived to the *Hebrews*, as *Theodoret* confesses; observing only, that whereas the *Ægyptians* sacrificed either to Dæmons or Idols, the *Israelites* through the Divine permission were allow'd to offer them to God. St. *Jerom* also upon the words of *Jeremiah* (chap. 7. ver. 21.) saith, That God at last did allow the use of Sacrifices to himself, lest otherwise they should be made to false Gods: whereupon also he notes, that *Moses* never commanded the use of Sacrifices, but by the way of tolerating them after the *Israelites* were come out of *Ægypt*, where the sweetness of Sacrifices seems first to have been found out; for not only their Bellies, but also their Backs profited by them; *tunicæ pelliceæ*, or Coats of Skins being their usual Garments: for which reason the *Cruenta Sacrificia* were most esteem'd of all others.

XVI.

XVI.

There are many general things obſervable in all or moſt of their Offerings, and of myſtical ſignification; as this: That although their Gods were notoriouſly guilty of Fraud, Rapine, and Violence, yet above all other Oblations they delighted moſt in Creatures meek and harmleſs, as Doves, Sheep, and Oxen; which were not only better Meat for their Prieſts, than Lyons and Tygers, or the like, but alſo ſerved for an Emblem; to ſhew that ſoft and innocent Natures, were ordained for a prey to the fraudulent, rapacious and violent: In the obſervation whereof, the wiſe Spectators inſtructed themſelves to their own advantage and ſafety. Much to this purpoſe was that ſaying of an Ancient Father, *Omnes nos ſumus aut Corvi qui lacerant, aut Cadavera quæ lacerantur*; according to our Engliſh Proverb, he who makes himſelf a Sheep, becomes a prey to the Wolfe. Therefore *Mahomet* to make is Diſciples all Wolves, delivers this Impious Doctrine, That he who forgives an Injury does well, but he who revenges it, does better; ſuppoſing that a conſtant Revenge for Injuries, would in time make Men more wary of comm ing them, and by conſequence advance Morality. Alſo *Machiavil's* deſign being to render his Diſciples ſo rapacious, that they might be able to encounter the

worſt of Men; he is by the ingenious *Bocaline* in his *Parnaſſus*, reſembled to a Man that driving a Flock of Sheep into a Corner, did there take out their own Teeth, and in their ſtead, gave each of them a ſet of Wolves Teeth; ſo that whereas before, one Shepherd was able to drive a whole Flock, now each Sheep hath need of a particular Shepherd, and all little enough too. Much to our purpoſe is it noted by *Plutarch*, that great Princes in their Shields, do ever give Creatures of Force and Rapine, as Eagles, Lions, Dragons, and the like, to teach them how to maintain their Grandeur: In reſemblance whereof, *Henry* the 4th of *France*, had ever engraven upon his Ordnance this Motto, *Ratio ultima Regum*; but however for petry Princes, a Fox may be the better Emblem.

XVII.

Theſe Sacrifices upon extraordinary occaſions, were ever preſented with wonderful Solemnity and Magnificence; for according to St. *Paul*'s Obſervation, they holding we were the Off ſpring of the Gods, might probably conjecture that our great delight which we take in ſolemn Shows and Muſick, might be originally derived into our Natures, from the like Spirit in the Divine Original of Nature, of whom we proceed: And if ſo, then theſe kind of Solemnities ſeem proper Sacrifices to the *Genius* of Mankind, and by conſequence, would at leaſt take with Men, if not

not with God. However, they were found to work two great effects upon the Peoples Minds: The one, of concern to Religion; the other, to the State. The concern as to Religion was, in raising a kind of Veneration and awful Terrour in the Spectators; which is a frame of Spirit most susceptible of Devotion, excluding all wandring, light and vain Thoughts. Therefore in the most ancient times, the chief part of their Divine Worship was celebrated in thick Groves; and afterwards when they erected Temples, many of them were of magnificent structure, but ever so gloomy and dark, as they were in the day time fain to make use of Lamps upon their Altars; for such a Light represents any Show much more splendidly than open day-light: As we plainly see in our Theatres, who but for that advantage, would never be at the charge of Lamps and Candles in the Summer time. These stately Representations of their Offerings, with the Priests fantastical Vestments and profound Gravity, was a kind of Acting their Religion as it were upon a Stage; and it fared also with that, as with *Opera's*, which ever take better Acted, than Read: *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures, Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.* The whole History of most of their Gods, was at the time of their several Festivals very splendidly Acted after the manner of publick Plays, and generally in

dumb-shows, without any Words at all; as supposing every one from his Childhood acquainted with the Story by his Religious Education. These Shows upheld their fabulous Divinity many Thousand Years, perhaps much longer than if they had grounded it upon Argumentative Discourses and Syllogisms, which are knacks that either take not the multitude at all, or never hold them long: For either the Cares of the World stifle them, or at best after a time, they grow as tedious as a Fiddler, that can play but one Tune. Besides, these frequent Representations were no less effectual to strengthen the Peoples Faith, than if they heard the Articles of their Faith daily rehears'd unto them; which is the most prevalent way of Naturalizing a Religion to the People, how false soever; since nothing is more frequent, than to have Men tell Lies (though of their own inventions,) so often, till in time they themselves grow to believe them true.

XVIII.

The other Concern, *viz.* of the State in those great Sanguinary Sacrifices, was by inuring the People to such horrid and bloody Sights, which though but of Beasts, yet doubtless tended much to the hardning of their Hearts against all apprehensions of Blood and Death, either in themselves or others; rendring them fitter for the Wars and

and thereby more capable either of defending or enlarging their Empire. Upon this Conſideration it is, that our Laws will not admit a Butcher to ſerve upon the Jury of Life and Death: Alſo at the Battel of *Edgehill*, it was generally obſerv'd, that one Foot-Regiment of Butchers, behaved themſelves more ſtoutly than any other Regiment of either ſide; and yet they had never before that time been fl-ſh'd in any blood but that of Beaſts. To this purpoſe therefore the ancient *Romans* did much harden the Hearts of their Men, by uſing them to various other inhumane bloody Sights; as, Gladiators ſlaughtering one another in their Amphitheatres, and condemning Malefactors to be there torn in pieces by wild Beaſts, for the diverſion of the People; which occaſion'd the Primitive Church to prohibit the Chriſtians all ſuch bloody Sights, as not intending or approving of ſuch hardneſs of Heart, but rather chooſing to govern in the Spirit of Meekneſs and Innocence, hoping thereby to gain a greater ſubmiſſion: Whereas the Heathen Princes, (eſpecially the *Romans*,) when they arrived to that Grandeur, as encouraged them into an ambition of conquering the Univerſe, deſired, in purſuance of that wicked Deſign, to educate their People in ſuch fierceneſs and inhumanity, as might fit them for that purpoſe. And the Heathen Prieſts

(who were certainly the wickedeſt and craftieſt of Men) knowing how ſerviceable they might be to the Prince, as well as the Prince to them, in a deſpotick Government, ſoon diſcover'd their own intereſt, in being Contributers to that Deſign.

XIX.

Now conſidering theſe things, and where all regard of God and Nature was laid aſide, the uſe of their Sacrifices could not but be very pertinent; and apprehended that way, were not ſo abſurd as by *Lucian* and other ingenious Perſons they are repreſented to have been. The common People were ſo weak, as to be deluded into the belief of theſe Trumperies, by that fallacious Argument which all Superſtitions have ever made uſe of, and indeed lies as well for one as another, (*viz.*) that the vulgar Faith was the ſafeſt. But however, the great and Prudent Men amongſt them, were not ſo ſottiſh and blind, as not to diſcern the intrinſick worthleſſneſs of their Superſtitions, however they upheld them for worldly advantage; and therefore when a *Roman* General deferr'd to give the ſignal of a Battel; becauſe the Southſayers Chickens forbore to eat; a Young Nobleman ſtanding by, told him, He wondred he would omit ſo great an opportunity for ſo ſmall a thing: To whom the General reply'd, Theſe things ſeem ſmall, but our Fore fathers by regarding

ing these little things, have made this Commonwealth great. And to shew that when they were not under these politick Corruptions, but free to declare their own Judgments, their inward Devotion was more excellent than their outward Profession, observe what one of their own Poets delivers concerning Sacrifices:

Non Bove mactato cœlestia numina gaudent,
Sed quæ præstanda est vel sine teste Fide. Ov.